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ART. III. — 1. *First Annual Report of the Boston Academy of Music.* 1833. 8vo. pp. 11.

2. *Second Annual Report.* 1834. 8vo. pp. 23.

3. *Third Annual Report.* 1835. 8vo. pp. 24.

WE presume there is no doubt of the successful establishment among us, at length, of an institution for the cultivation of the higher branches of music, in which instruction shall be given regularly and abundantly. It is time for such an institution, for the prevalent ignorance has been, and indeed still continues lamentable ; yet an interest seems to be now awakening in the community which the Boston Academy should cherish, and the calls of which for better music than we have hitherto had, it should supply. We doubt not that judicious efforts will be perseveringly made. The tone of the Reports is resolute, and the performances at the Odeon, the past season, have been of a promising character. We are glad to perceive that premature efforts are not made to accomplish what cannot be done well ; for, though the art is illimitably long, yet a slow progress is the most sure, and will ultimately be found the most rapid. The taste of the public, too, cannot be forced ; but must be carried gradually and easily along to the highest branches of the art, or it will fall back again to the rude and unformed state from which it is just emerging.

The progress of this taste and of a corresponding skill in other times and other countries, is a curious subject for inquiry ; for of all the fine arts music, though it may be the last to attain perfection, was probably the first to arrive at some degree of excellence. Nature abounds, to such an extent, in musical tones, and the physical organization of man affords so perfect an instrument, — it is, moreover, so strong an impulse of our constitution to express our emotions with the quick, rapid cry of joy, or the prolonged intonation of grief, that we are irresistibly led to the conclusion, that men must soon have followed in a path pointed out so clearly by nature. Our first mother doubtless soothed her first infant by a musical modulation ; and, however multiplied and various the tribes of her descendants, none have ever become so rude as not to possess some musical ideas, and some taste for those arrangements and combinations of sound which we call melody and harmony. Music must be cultivated, however, and some improve-

ment must be made upon the sounds which are the effect of mere natural impulse, something like system must be introduced, before it deserves the name of an art. It cannot be uninteresting to trace the progress of this art, in the various ages of the world, to the great and delightful results it is able to produce in this our day. It has, at all times and in all places, been an object of deep interest ; and from the moment when the first sound issued from Memnon's statue, or " Miriam's tuneful voice " led the song of triumph, or " Timotheus' varied lays " surprised his delighted audience, down to the last night of the last new opera, from Jubal to Bellini, the whole interval has been filled with the triumphs of this beautiful art ; the whole human race has felt its power, enjoyed its sweetness, and honored its professors. In vain has the satirist sneered, the moralist lamented, the severe reproved. Music is a necessity of our nature. It is impossible fully to express our emotions without its aid ; and whether we exult in triumph, or humble ourselves in contrition, whether we enjoy God's bounties, or pray for his mercy, the service is incomplete, the expression is inadequate, unless music lend her various strain.

But interesting as this study might be, we are unhappily deprived of the means of pursuing it with regard to the earlier ages of refinement and cultivation. It is only since the revival of letters that the progress of the art can be traced satisfactorily. It has, indeed, been invented twice ; and our opinion of what it was in the primitive ages of the world must be formed from the following sources only, namely, the analogy of nature, the effects produced by it, and the imperfect description of its character found in the authors of classic antiquity. No instruments have come down to us by which the tone of a single sound of their scale can be determined ; and, in the absence of all positive knowledge on this subject, we are left to the presumption, that, as the natural scale of the human voice and the construction of the human ear were probably the same then as now, the instruments formed to harmonize with the one, and gratify the other, must have been of a kind analogous, at least, to those of a more modern date, if not absolutely identical with them ; and that the art, so far as it was cultivated at all, was pursued in a manner somewhat similar to that of our own times.

The earliest music on record is the song of Moses and the Israelites after the passage of the Red sea, when Miriam took

a timbrel in her hand, and answered them. "And all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances." Here it may be observed, that the instrument, whatever it was, that is called *timbrel*, was used merely as an accompaniment to the voice, or, it may be, to the dance. And this is true of nearly all the instrumental music of those times called ancient. It was, for the most part, little more than an accompaniment to the voice, generally following it very exactly in its modulation and its time. Still the power of music could not have been slight or unimportant ; for it is not merely, nor principally, by the pleasure it affords the ear, that it produces its effects ; but by the natural expression of emotion or passion, thus appealing to and exciting feelings which may be of the most intense energy. Such effects may be produced by music of a simple character, as well as by that of a complicated and scientific kind. Expression can be given to the wild war-hoop of the Indian, as well as to the elaborate composition of the European ; and expression never fails to excite a corresponding emotion in the breast of the auditor. In speaking and thinking, therefore, of the strange and astonishing effects ascribed to ancient music, which, after all due allowance for poetic exaggeration, will still remain very great, it should be constantly borne in mind, that these effects are due, not to scientific combinations of sound, but to natural, strong expression, which exercises its sympathetic power in proportion to its naturalness, rather than its abstract science. It is, indeed, the aim of all true science in music to give to those studied combinations which please the cultivated musical intellect, that various and true expression which is able to touch the heart of every hearer, whether skilled or not in the charming art. Nothing is so barren, so tedious, so utterly vexatious, as a long, labored, scientific piece of harmony, in which expression is either wanting or indistinct. It is addressed, not to a mixed audience, but to the scientific composer only, who alone can appreciate the great difficulties conquered, or the immense labor bestowed ; and one might as well attempt to please an assembly by a dissertation on the differential calculus, intelligible to the mathematician only, as by such a musical composition.

This fact seems to have been lost sight of in the interminable discussions which have taken place respecting the musical attainments of the ancients. It has been inferred

from the extraordinary stories which have come down to us of its effects, that it must have been very elaborate, scientific, and skilfully complicated ; and, on the other hand, it has been inferred, from the obvious, acknowledged simplicity of the instruments in use, and the seeming imperfection of the ancient scale, with the uncertainty respecting the means of combination of sounds then understood, that all those stories were mere fables, absolute inventions of the fathers of history and poetry. Neither inference is necessary ; and if it be recollected that the effect of music does not depend upon its scientific arrangement, so much as on its expressive simplicity, the accounts of its effects, however wonderful, may be easily reconciled with the comparative rudeness of the instruments by the aid of which those effects were produced. It may be remarked, too, that one instrument was then in use, which, there is no reason to doubt, was as perfect as it is at the present moment ; capable of producing the same thrilling tones, the same touching cadences, the same variety, strength, and delicacy of expression. That these powers should have lain dormant among people of luxurious tastes and intellectual refinement, is altogether incredible, whatever may have been the artificial divisions of the gamut, or however imperfect the means of recording the tones of the human voice.

There was a long period, however, in the history of the world, when luxury and refinement did not exist ; and when, without doubt, music was in the same imperfect and rude state as the other arts of life. It is certain, that no very rich combinations of harmony could have been made by those who were acquainted with no other instrument than the timbrel, just mentioned, and the trumpet. Moses, who had been carefully trained in all the learning of the Egyptians, in which music was deemed worthy to hold a place, caused two silver trumpets to be made “ for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps ;” and no other instrument of music is mentioned throughout the history of the Hebrew legislator. It would be rash to infer that nothing else was known, at this period, to the Egyptians ; for the condition of the Israelites scarcely permitted them to give much attention to the superfluities of life, and, though it is impossible to fix the date of their invention, it is well known that several other instruments were in use among the ancient inhabitants of Egypt. The lyre, the pipe, the kettle-drum, and the sistrum

are reckoned by Burgh the only instruments of that people ; but to these must be added the trumpet and timbrel, as it is scarcely probable that Moses invented them, and an instrument of two strings, somewhat resembling the mandolin in shape and size, described by Dr. Burney from a figure on an ancient obelisk. It is known, too, that the learned men of Egypt early made profound mathematical calculations respecting the proportions of sounds, a study implying some acquaintance with the vibrations of musical strings ; but, as historians in those days were less careful than writers of a later time to fix the dates of events, it is impossible to speak with the desirable precision of the order of invention of musical instruments, as well as of many other things still more important. All we can do is to observe, that at certain periods progress in the art is perceptible, and the most thorough investigation could lead to nothing more than a conjecture as to the year or even the century of an invention.

From the time of Moses no mention of music is made, in the history of the Hebrews, till the reign of Saul ; with the exceptions of the song of Deborah and Barak, which does not appear to have been accompanied by instruments ; and the timbrel of the unhappy daughter of Jephthah, who went to meet her more unhappy father “ with timbrels and with dances.” * In the hands of David we first hear of the harp, and in the use which he made of it we find perhaps an early instance of the instrument being played independently, and not simply as an accompaniment to the voice and the poetry, which seem to have constituted a principal part of the charm of ancient music. We find, too, a striking resemblance in the effect produced by the minstrelsy of the Hebrew shepherd boy, and that of our own contemporary music ; a resemblance which shows, that, if the human heart had the same feelings and affections then as now, the music which produces like effects cannot be very dissimilar in its character. “ And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand : so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.” † How many a melancholy spirit has been cheered,

* The ram's-horns, used at the siege of Jericho, can scarcely be regarded as *musical* instruments.

† 1 Sam. xvi. 23.

how many a sorrowing heart has been soothed by the irresistible charm of music in later days. And it has often occurred to us that the moody gloom, which, like Saul's, amounts almost to madness, might be chased from the soul, and greatly alleviated, if not wholly cured, by the skill of the "cunning player," or the voice of the "well-instructed in song."

The musical taste and talent of David were not unemployed during his whole reign. He composed, and encouraged others to compose those Psalms, which from the day they were written have been held in the highest esteem, as the most beautiful specimens of devotional poetry existing in the literature of any people. The poets of antiquity were always musicians, and there is no reason to doubt that David himself prepared the music as well as the verse of his own sacred songs. Another very probable occupation may have been superintending the musical education of those who were training for the splendid service of the future temple ; for it appears, that in his old age, when he had resigned the kingdom to Solomon, the number of the singers set apart for this service was two hundred and eighty-eight,* and the number of the Levites taught to play upon instruments made by David himself† was four thousand. This is the first Conservatorio of which we have a distinct record ; and we cannot hold it in light esteem, when we observe that David himself prepared the poetry, the music, and the instruments, that it was constantly under the eye of the king, and that it was intended as an Academy for the education of those who were to officiate in the highest and most interesting service known to the nation, the service of the Temple. What those instruments were that were invented by David, or which were in use in his day, it is now in vain to inquire. Nothing is left, from which even a probable conjecture can be formed. All we know is, that they were of various sorts, of both wind and stringed instruments, the names of which have been translated, to be sure, into various languages, but, so far as we are concerned, might as well have been left in the original Hebrew.‡ The lute, the

* 1 Chron. xxv. 7.

† 1 Chron. xxiii. 5, and 2 Chron. vii. 6.

‡ Our English Bible says, "Jubal was the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ." Jubal's organs were probably not like that of York, or of Haarlem. But the French translators thought proper to call Jubal, the father of such as handle the violin and the organ ; thus carrying the invention of the fiddle farther back than the painter who put one into the hands of Apollo.

pipe, the timbrel, the trumpet, the horn, are English words certainly, as well as the harp, the cymbal, the drum, and the organ, but they may, and probably do, stand for things very different in character from David's instruments ; while it would be difficult for a mere English scholar to give a definite idea of what is meant by a psaltery, a shawm, or a sackbut. Here are already twelve instruments, and it seems not improbable that others are intended by the words *neginoth*, *gittith*, *sheminith*, &c., which occur in the titles of the Psalms, and which have been a sad stumblingblock to the learned commentators, who would have been satisfied, could they but have fallen upon an English name, with some degree of plausibility. At all events, we may feel some confidence in the assertion, that the accompaniment of instruments to Hebrew music possessed considerable richness. And, if we believe what is stated in the first Book of Chronicles,* that the singers "were employed in that work day and night," we can have little doubt of their accomplished skill.

The reign of Solomon was preëminent, in the history of the Jews, for every thing which elevated them in the relative rank of nations. Their subsequent intestine divisions, and subjugation to a foreign yoke, prevented them from retaining the taste for music, which had flourished in the days of their national prosperity ; and we hear no more of their skill in the art, or their fondness for its practice. The only other nation, whose music can be traced back to so high an antiquity as that of the Jews, is the Egyptian ; but, in ascending to so remote a date, we are lost in a cloud of uncertainty, which rapidly gathers into the night of total ignorance. It is but stating the truth to say, that the amount of our knowledge respecting it is, that the Egyptians had some kind of music, and some kinds of musical instruments, though what they were it is impossible to determine ; that music was much studied and held in honor among them, and that from them was derived much which was afterwards known and practised in Greece.

It is in the music of Greece and Italy, that we are naturally more interested than in that of any other of the people of antiquity, on several accounts. The Greeks were more refined in various ways, than any other nation, and we know more

* 1 Chron. ix. 33.

of their character, history, and habits. Their literature is more familiar to us ; and though all that we know of their music amounts to but little, yet even that little is unknown with respect to the music of all other civilized inhabitants of the ancient world. It is extremely difficult to rescue that which may seem probable, in relation to ancient music, from the almost unintelligible jargon by which it is covered up, by writers who have interpreted ancient authors according to a preconceived theory of their own, or who have undertaken to translate musical terms without either knowledge of the art, or respect for its theory, and have overlaid with a mass of perplexing erudition a subject already sufficiently involved in obscurity. We shall endeavour carefully to separate what is known and certain, from what is unknown or doubtful, and to distinguish, as clearly as may be practicable, between the probable and the improbable.

The first fact, which is undisputed on all hands, is the intimate connexion existing between the poetry in all its forms, the eloquence, and the music of the ancients. Their poets sang their own compositions, their orators were attended by musicians with instruments to give them the pitch of their voice, and their dramas were sung as well as acted. It has been asserted that they had no music unconnected with the voice, though one can scarcely imagine an assertion more entirely gratuitous. The mention of instrumental music is, to be sure, rare among the authors to whom we must recur for information on the subject ; but let us suppose for a moment an age of barbarism to supervene on the present state of the world, and all existing literature and art to be blotted out, and then recovered again as those of the Greeks have been. It would not be very difficult, one would think, to frame a theory with respect to modern music, which should exclude instruments, except as an accompaniment to the voice, if no writings of a professed musician should happen to be recovered from the common destruction. In works of general literature, music is rarely described in such a way as to give precise and accurate ideas of its character ; and, though the shapes assumed by literature in modern times are so much more various, though we have tours, letters, dictionaries, and a thousand other productions which the Greeks had not, yet we can easily conceive of an Australian antiquary, some two thousand years hence, as-
serting with the confidence to which his researches may entitle

him, that the instrumental music of the ancient Europeans, and their less cultivated descendants in America, was merely used as an accompaniment to the voice ; that part of their religious worship was the singing of psalms accompanied by the organ ; that in their social meetings the piano accompanied the song, and at their theatres the whole object of the orchestra, composed as it was of all the instruments then known, was to sustain the voice of the singer, and fill up the short pauses required by the meaning of the words ; indeed, that the only use that can be discovered of instrumental music independently of the voice, was to regulate the step of a procession or of a military corps. This sounds absurdly enough, and we should say that our Australian descendant might give us a little more credit for progress in the art, though he could not find any account of instrumental music in the Poems of Cowper, or the Essays of Johnson, the Dramas of Racine, or the History of Hume. Why is it not equally absurd to make such an assertion with regard to the ancient Greeks ? They were a people of at least as much ingenuity as any that have since existed ; they had a decided taste for music, and, if we may judge by the general accounts of its effects which have reached us, great skill in its execution ; they had instruments of many kinds, both wind and stringed, and yet they never could play unless some one sang. It is enough to state such a proposition ; reply is unnecessary. We know, too, that music was constantly practised by the people and profoundly examined by their philosophers. The best treatise of ancient music, that has come down to us, is by Euclid, in which he examines the relations of harmonic sounds ; and if we understood what he treats of without explanation, as familiar to all, we should probably arrive at some more just ideas of ancient music.

Another thing which is generally agreed on by writers on this subject is, that the Greeks had but two divisions of sound in regard to time, namely, a long and a short one, and that the latter was just half the length of the former. Brilliant music this would make ! The rudest inhabitant of Central Africa has a greater variety than this, and a better idea of musical rhythm. Just imagine Sappho whining out her lyrics in alternate longs and shorts, or Timotheus drawling before Alexander, “softly sweet, in Lydian measures.” The softer the better, one would think, in such measure. But it cannot be imagined. It is utterly inconceivable, that the instincts of

nature should be tamed down to such miserable insipidity in a people of lively imagination, like the Greeks. We cannot but regard it as a piece of that pedantry, which will believe nothing but what is on record, and will insist on interpreting the record according to its own limited conceptions. We venture to take it for granted, without quoting authors to prove it, that the Greeks, as well as the Hebrews, as they had instruments, could play upon them without singing, and that their long sound was subdivided into more than two equal parts.

Another point upon which all must be agreed, as there is no room for uncertainty about it, is, that the ancients had nothing corresponding to the musical score or notation of modern times. They had a name and a sign, derived from their alphabet, for every note of the scale, and according to the most respectable conjectures (see Burney's *History*) their scale embraced three octaves, or twenty-two notes ; they had three genera, the diatonic, the chromatic, and the enharmonic, and fifteen modes or keys, in all of which the name of each sound was different, so that, according to the computation of Burette, the names of their notes amounted to sixteen hundred and twenty. If this be true, the study must have been laborious indeed, and would require the three years, which Plato allowed the young to devote to it, to acquire its elements. There is much, also, which is mysterious, and indeed unintelligible, in the accounts that are given us of the genera and tones, or keys, of Grecian music ; and it would be neither interesting nor profitable to attempt the hopeless task of explaining what so many scholars and musicians have failed to make clear. It is indeed manifest, that without a definite idea of the sound of a single note, or an accurate knowledge of a single interval of their scale, and with absolutely nothing to guide us as to their divisions of time, it can be but dreaming and trifling to think of proving any thing precise or satisfactory with regard to the musical composition of the Greeks. If proof be required that we really do know nothing important respecting it, we have a demonstration in the attempt of Meibomius, one of the most learned and thorough of all the commentators on ancient authors who touch upon music, to imitate the Grecian style of singing and playing. Queen Christina, of Sweden, to whom he had dedicated his elaborate work, desirous of obtaining a more accurate idea of the ancient music than she could do from

the book, directed him to have instruments made of Grecian construction, to accompany a song composed on Greek principles as he understood them, to which another professor was to add a Greek dance. When the hour of this concert arrived, and the performance began, it was accompanied by the irrepressible laughter of the assembled court; and the enraged Meibomius, after inflicting a box on the ear of the person whom he suspected of instigating the plot, quitted Stockholm for ever.* Is it possible to imagine, for a moment, that what excited mere laughter at Stockholm, could have been the delight of Athens two thousand years before? Could a people, of so strong a musical taste as the Greeks, have been so singularly rude in the practice of the art? Or is it more probable that Meibomius, and all who have copied him in his account of ancient music, have fallen into errors, and made assertions not warranted by the accuracy of their knowledge?

One of these assertions, which seems to us of doubtful character, is that the octave of the ancients was divided into two tetrachords; and that this was regarded as the principal division of the scale, instead of octaves. The word *tetrachord* means literally four strings, or an instrument of four strings, such as were some of the earliest harps or lyres used in Greece. The question is, How were these strings tuned? Did they consist, as would be naturally supposed, of the third, fifth, and octave of the tonic, or were they, according to this theory of the tetrachords, the first, *fourth*, fifth, and eighth, and the lyre thus divided into the two halves of an octave? It must be recollected that the ancient lyre was played with the hand, or struck with a plectrum, and that there were no finger-board and bow, like those of the violin, to regulate the sound of the strings. They must necessarily have given the sound to which they were tuned, like the strings of the modern harp. We must believe the ears of the Greeks, then, to have been differently constructed from our own, or to have been most extraordinarily obtuse, if they could have enjoyed the sounds which would have been produced by either the consecutive or simultaneous touching of these strings, "a combination," says

* Another version of this story is, that the Queen directed Meibomius to compose a mass according to his explanation of the Grecian music, and that its performance was prevented by the inextinguishable laughter of singers, players, and audience. — "*Discorso sulla Origine, Progresso, e Stato attuale della Musica Italiana* di Andrea Majer."

Majer, "enough to drive a dog mad." But on the other hand, what could be more natural or more pleasing than to tune them at intervals of thirds, thus forming the fundamental chord? It is worthy of remark, too, that the outside strings were considered as fixed, being the extremes of the octave; and the inside strings as movable, that is, they might be tuned higher or lower. This, on the supposition that the middle strings were the third and fifth, would give an opportunity for a change of key from major to minor, or the reverse, without affecting the outside strings; but it would be to little purpose, if they were tuned as the fourth and fifth. One would think the half of the octave must be as much fixed as the extremes.

It is extraordinary, if Meibomius, Martini, Burney, and others have interpreted the Greek system of music aright, that they should have imagined the ancients could have thought the fourth and fifth a chord with the first. This is manifestly impossible. It is a discord which the ear rejects with disgust and pain; and neither Timotheus, nor Philoxenus, nor Sappho, nor Apollo himself could make any thing else of it. Why should we insist, then, upon the Greek music being discordant, rather than imagine a few modern scholars to have fallen into error, especially when, from the scanty means of forming an opinion which are left, such an error is very fairly excusable? Still the language of the ancients respecting the tetrachords remains to be explained in some way; and if we may be allowed, without incurring the charge of temerity, to make a suggestion on this vexed subject, we should say the difficulty might, perhaps, be solved, by supposing them to have divided their notes by semitones instead of tones. It is obvious that the interval between major thirds is two tones, or *four* half-tones; and here we have at once a tetrachord of semi-tones, of which there would be three in every octave,* and the first notes of each tetrachord would be in harmony. Thus C, E, and G would accord with each other, and with the C which would complete the octave, and form the first note of the following tetrachord. We merely throw out this suggestion, without venturing to assert that it would solve the

* Suppose C to be the tonic, the first tetrachord would consist of C, C#, D, D#; the second of E, F, F#, G; the third of G#, A, A#, B.

problem, but leaving it to others to justify or reject it. “Non nostrum tantas componere lites.”

But the great subject of discussion among the literati, who have treated of ancient music, is whether or not the ancients understood counterpoint, or the arrangement of different parts or voices in such manner, that there should be melody in each, and harmony in the whole together. While some have contended, that this complicated art must have been understood, from the effects produced by music in ancient times, so far surpassing what it is able to do now, others again, not content with denying them the finished skill of modern composers, have even refused them any thing like harmony ; and have contended, that the voices and instruments, however numerous they might be, were all in unison. In the absence of all historical record on the subject, one would say that each of these extreme opinions was equally improbable. With regard to the argument from the effects, it has been somewhat ludicrously overstrained. People seem almost to have believed in sincerity, that Amphion built walls, Arion rode dolphins, and Orpheus made trees dance, by the mere power of harmony. Probably the influence of song upon the modern art of navigation is quite as powerful as it was upon the ancient art of masonry ; yet no one will contend that sailors are now-a-days very accomplished musicians. Nor can it be imagined, that these strange stories, though not taken literally, yet must be considered as poetical representations of wonderful effects. The results, stripped of their coloring, are no more extraordinary than are constantly produced now ; and indeed we are persuaded it must have been far less difficult for Timotheus to have stirred the excitable temper of an Alexander to vehement action, than for a modern songstress to have thrown the calm population of Boston into such a kind of ecstatic delirium, as many of us have witnessed, and some of us have experienced, the past winter. Let it be remembered, that the greatest effects in music are always produced by the human voice. Instruments and harmony and scientific combinations of tones are all very delightful ; but it is the song or the chorus which melts the heart with tenderness, or fills it with joy, or overawes it with sublimity. It is sympathy with emotion expressed, which we feel ; and, as the human voice can give greater depth and variety of expression than any other instrument what-

ever, it cannot fail, as long as human nature continues unchanged, to produce the most powerful effects in music.

And what was there to render ancient Greece less musical than modern Italy? Had they not the taste, the refinement, the quickness of perception, the climate, which seem suitable for the cultivation of the art in perfection? And shall we believe, that all this aptitude for music was lost, thrown away upon them, because a few students tell us they had no knowledge of harmony, and no other rhythmical divisions of sound than into one long and one short one? Those who think more highly of names than of nature will believe all this, hard as it may be to credit; but we think the dictates of nature are not to be set aside so easily. The musical ear must have fallen upon harmony by accident, if it could not attain it by study; and, as for their rhythmical divisions, to suppose they had but one long and one short sound, is denying the Greeks the musical instinct, of which, by general consent, they had a large share.

But this question need not be referred to nature alone for decision. There are some passages of ancient authors which would seem to be of difficult interpretation, if the ancients had no just ideas of harmony, but which are perfectly and at once intelligible, if such ideas be conceded. Take, for instance, the following language of Longinus; "For, as in music the principal note derives sweetness from those which are called chords,* so periphrasis," &c. (Chap. 28.) He could hardly have used language referring more plainly to harmonious sounds; and what can be made of those few words, unless his ear and those of his readers were accustomed to harmony?

There is also a passage of Tertullian, quoted by Majer, of which the following is a translation.

"Look at the prodigious richness of Archimedes. I speak of the hydraulic organ; so many members, so many parts, so many contrivances, so many passages and combinations of sound, so many changes of mode, a whole army of pipes, and all this one mass!"

Who could better describe the modern organ? Was Archimedes, then, ignorant of harmony? And those who

* *Παράφωνοι* is a word which nobody translates, but which, if its etymology may be trusted, is equivalent to the Latin *consonus* and the English *chord*.

listened to his instrument, were they unacquainted with its effects ?

Consider for a moment the construction of the ancient theatrical chorus. It is well known that the Greek dramas were sung ; that they were in fact what we call operas ; and that the chorus was composed, as in modern times, of all the four parts into which the voice is divisible. Here is a description of it by Seneca. “ Do you not see of how many voices the chorus consists ? Some are shrill, some deep, some intermediate. The tones of woman are joined to those of man ; instruments are added ; and individual voices are merged in the union of the whole.” Had the man who wrote this sentence no conception of music, except that derived from melody ? The idea seems preposterous. It is not contended, that the ancients were familiar with counterpoint in all its modern extent and expansibility ; but it is impossible to believe, that their knowledge of music reached no farther than to the production of melody or unison, after a due consideration of the passages quoted. Nothing arrives at perfection suddenly ; and, though we are very much in the habit of thinking ourselves perfect, and that the science of musical composition has in our day reached its *ne plus ultra*, yet constant experience demonstrates a constant improvement ; and perhaps our children will express as much wonder and pity at our music, as we feel for the more imperfect attainments of our fathers. Indeed, if we consider for a single moment the number of changes that may be produced by a few notes, we shall be convinced that the varieties of musical composition are indeed infinite. In an octave there are twelve semitones, and upon any instrument, however simple, containing these twelve sounds, there may be produced four hundred and seventy-nine million, one thousand, six hundred changes. Multiply these by the number of octaves, and the number of instruments now in use, and we have a variety as inconceivable as it is inexhaustible. We are still far from perfection, then, and why should we suppose the ancients to have made no progress in an art, which we practise but incompletely ourselves, and the first elements of which are easily attained ?

Another point, which strikes us quite as strangely as this, and which runs through almost all writers on ancient music, is, that

the Greeks composed all their music in the minor mode.* One might as well imagine all their poetry was elegiac, all their orations funereal, and all their songs death-songs. The earliest music of all countries is generally, like the music of the nursery, of a plaintive character, and in a minor key ; but, whenever and wherever music has been cultivated as an art, it has never rested in that primitive and simple condition, so far as is really known ; and, in the actual state of our knowledge, or rather of our ignorance of ancient music, it seems to us the very height of presumption to assert, that the ingenious Greeks never got beyond the threshold of musical composition. If any thing can be said to be known of the Athenians, it is, that they were a lively, witty, imaginative race, more resembling the modern Parisians than any other people of the present day ; and it would be about as probable, that all French music should be minor, as that all Greek music was. It is a point which, of course, may be established by sufficient evidence ; but such evidence has not yet been presented to us.

Of the effect of music upon the character of a people, as well as on that of individuals, a striking example is referred to by Burney and others, the authority for which is no less than Polybius, the judicious and careful historian. The Arcadians were generally distinguished for their mild character and amiable virtues, whilst the inhabitants of Cynætha, one of the cities of Arcadia, were as remarkable for the ferocity and quarrelsome barbarity of their dispositions. This is ascribed by the historian to the neglect of the Arcadian institutions of music ; and it is a suggestion, which by no means deserves to be lightly regarded. It is not easy to limit the effect of constant causes ; and, if music had been the favorite entertainment of our own parent country, instead of bull-baitings, cock-fights, and sparring-matches, it is no very strained inference, that there might have been less of crime on the records of its courts, and less of harshness in the national manners. Certainly the kindred blood of Germany is favorably operated on by the prevailing fondness for music ; and it is not easy to believe, that one who is really devoted to so refined and refin-

* Gardiner in his "Music of Nature," page 461, says, in an incidental clause of a sentence, "the minor key, the only key known to the Greeks and Romans," &c., as if it were a thing universally admitted, and on which no doubt could rationally be suggested.

ing a pursuit, can be the victim of the coarser and more violent passions of our nature.

The unbounded variety of expression, of which music is susceptible, renders it easily applicable to all circumstances and situations where emotion of any kind is called forth ; and it is a necessary appendage to all public celebrations of events or ceremonies, in which any deep interest is felt. Its connexion with the religious observances from which human nature cannot refrain, has in all ages been most intimate, and must continue to be so as long as we seek to express in the strongest manner the deep emotions which are excited by religious subjects. The earliest recorded song is one of praise to Jehovah ; and, as we trace the history of music down through the periods of Greek and Roman cultivation, we find it always associated with religious rites. No sacrifice could be acceptable, no pomp could be imposing, if not accompanied by the beautiful or the sublime of musical intonation. Their dramas, too, were originally very much of the nature of religious services. Founded on some tale of their mythology, they were made the vehicles of such religious and moral instruction as the wisest of the ancients could convey ; and Livy informs us,* that the first introduction of theatrical representations into Rome was expressly for a religious purpose, namely, as a means of averting a pestilence which was attributed to the anger of the Gods.

Music has, from the earliest periods, been associated with the services of the Christian church. One of the first profane notices of the existence of such a sect is the letter of Pliny to Trajan, in which he says, “They assemble and sing hymns to Christ as a God.” Even in those primitive times of simplicity and peril, when the cave and the forest were the Christians’ only shelter, and the arch of heaven their only temple, even then rose the choral hymn ; the fulness of the heart could not be repressed, and, surrounded by the magnificent and the beautiful of creation, they adored their Creator in “music that whispered a heart-felt devotion in song and in prayer.”

In after ages, when the persecuted religion, everywhere spoken against, became the favored and triumphant system, music accompanied its introduction into the basilica, the temple, and the church. It has been fancifully enough imagined

* Lib. vii. cap. 2.

that the style of chanting, which was in use at that period, was derived from some species of more ancient, Grecian or even Hebrew music, thus forming a connecting link between the remotest ages and our own time. It is not impossible ; but that is all that can be said in favor of a notion, which rests, like many others, advanced by the historians of music, on the imagination alone. The chanting of that era, as far as can be learned from the imperfect accounts of it transmitted to us, very probably resembled, in a great degree, that of the priests of the Roman church of the present day, with little variety of modulation, and little regularity of measure. Very much was left to the discretion of the singer, and the influence of tradition ; the time was absolutely so, as no time table had yet been invented.

In the progress of taste, the singing in the church became more ornamented ; and it is a curious instance of the uncompromising consistency of human nature, of the perpetual recurrence of the same prejudices and feelings, that complaints were from time to time made of the excessive ornament of music, which, to our ears, would probably be chargeable with any thing rather than too much grace. The *canto fermo* of the church was originally, in all probability, chanting in unison and with great simplicity. When ornaments were introduced, they must have been performed by a single voice, while the rest continued the original chant ; and thus the performance gradually became separated into two parts, of which one was the principal air, and the other a connected accompaniment. This was called *discant*, or double chant ; and, as music became more important in the church, performers were engaged for this service ; and they were employed to sing one part and to *organize* the other, or imitate the sound of the organ in firmness and continuity. At least this seems a sufficiently probable interpretation of a word which can hardly be exactly defined now. The invention of the organ was begun in the early ages of Christianity, though it may not be possible to fix its precise date.

In the reign of Charlemagne a national controversy arose, which, though then settled by royal authority, has been open ever since ; and will be finally put to rest when national rivalry shall cease. The singers of Charles's court attended him to Rome to celebrate the festival of Easter ; and a violent dispute arose between them and the Italian performers, as to the

taste and correctness of their execution of the music of St. Gregory. The king gave it against his own choir, and employed Italian masters to reinstruct them in the true Gregorian style, which, he said, they had manifestly corrupted. From this period, the close of the eighth century, to the beginning of the eleventh, there was no such rapid or sudden progress in the art of music as to mark any particular point of time as an era in its history. Still, progress was made in it, and facilities were gradually accumulating for its study and its practice. The chanting became double, that is, in two regular parts accompanying each other in harmony throughout ; and the system of notation was improved by the introduction, at first, of a single line, red for the key of \bar{F} , and yellow for the key of C, above and below which line the notes were ranged, according to the acute or grave character of their tone. This was already a decided improvement on the preceding system of placing a hieroglyphic over each syllable of the word to be sung, representing the name and sound of the note ; but a variety of plans were at different times tried, such as drawing a line for each note, then using six lines for the notes of a hexachord, and afterwards reducing the number of lines to four, and using the spaces also, as in the modern system. The four lines and three spaces were just enough to give a place to each of the seven notes of the octave in the key of C, which was once the only key used in the church, the pure diatonic scale being the only one practised. Afterwards the key of F was introduced, and rendered necessary the use of the flat B, or *B molle*, as it was then called. This rich sound was the first accidental ever heard in a church.* The separation of the notes from the words, by placing them in a score, gave an opportunity for doing what must naturally have suggested itself to the composer, namely, writing the discant or double chant on two separate sets of lines, in which each note would correspond with one of the other part, and with the syllable on which it was to be sounded. This was doubtless the origin of *counterpoint*, *note against note* ; and from this small beginning has arisen, in the course of ages, the complicated art of the modern harmonist. The earliest notes used were square,

* It is to be presumed, that those at least, who believe in the Hebrew or Grecian origin of the *canto fermo*, will not contend that ancient music was always in the minor mode.

or lozenge-shaped, without stems, and were easily and frequently changed in writing into mere points. Hence the word *counterpoint*. Stems were ere long added to some notes to mark a different duration, thus giving a hint of a more exact division of sounds by the time they occupied. Letters were also prefixed to the score, which were gradually corrupted into the clumsy clefs now in use. They were originally intended to mark the key F, or C, and not the voice by which the part was to be sung. Thus we see, that, previous to the commencement of the eleventh century, there was a beginning of many things which served to facilitate both the composition of music and the practice of singing, as lines, notes, accidentals, and clefs. The use of accidentals implies, of course, changes of key.

We say all this was begun before the eleventh century ; for at that time appeared one of those distinguished men, who, effecting much for the progress of the science to which they devote themselves, acquire a renown even greater than their merits justify. This was Guido, the monk of Arezzo, who, in later times, has been held up to reverence as the inventor of counterpoint, and consequently the father of modern composition. From what has been said, it appears that this is rather more than he is entitled to. He doubtless contributed much to the improvement of musical composition in his day, but can scarcely be called the inventor of an art previously existing in its rudiments or simplest state. The praise to which he is entitled, and it is no small amount, is for having banished for ever the ancient names of the notes, and substituted for them six syllables that were found to predominate in the first verse of a hymn of St. John, *ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la*. When the sixteen hundred and twenty tremendous names of the ancient scale are recollected, such as *nete synemenon, parypate meson, hypate hypaton, proslambanomenos, &c.*, names which could be of no use in singing, and which, if they were not Greek, we should call Gothic and barbarous, it will readily be conceived what an immense facility was afforded to the student of music by the ingenuity of Guido. The progress of his pupils in a few months was equal to that made in as many years under the old system, and he was repeatedly sent for by the Pope, to establish schools upon his plan at Rome. Such, however, was the seclusion of the monasteries, where alone, almost, music was then either taught or practised, so

infrequent were communications, and so toilsome was travelling, that even this vast improvement was long in making its way into general use. It was not till ages after Guido's time, that the octave was completed by the addition of the syllable *si*, and still later that the Italians substituted the more open and euphonious sound of *do*, for the contracted one of *ut*.

Great as are the obligations of music to Guido for giving simplicity to its arrangement and the method of instruction in it, yet it may be reasonably doubted if he contributed so much to the progress of the art as the inventor of the time-table, whoever he was. The regular subdivision of notes was not fairly and fully accomplished till the fourteenth century, three hundred years after the time of Guido, and it is uncertain by whom it was then achieved. Musical writers, according to Dr. Burney, have heretofore ascribed it to Jean de Muris ; but Jean de Muris himself attributes it to Master Franco of Cologne, thus carrying the invention back to the middle or end of the eleventh century. The probability seems strong, that many contributed their efforts, at different periods, to the perfecting of that branch of the art, which yields to none in importance. It was the proper and accurate subdivision of notes, and the strict observance of time, which made music a really independent art. Before that was studied, singing must either have been guided by the intention of the composer, and handed down by tradition, or it must have been entirely *ad libitum*, and at the momentary pleasure of the performer ; and if a number of vocal or instrumental performers were to execute a piece of music together, nothing but the most immense and laborious practice could have enabled them to keep within harmonious distance of each other. The difficulties of the art must have been immeasurably greater than at present, and will account for the great number of years that were thought necessary to attain reasonable skill even in its then imperfect condition, and for the very slow progress which was made in its improvement. Think, for a moment, what would be the effect of setting a piece of music before even a well-instructed choir at the present day, in the score of which no measures were marked, and in which but one kind of note, of unvaried form, was used for every tone introduced ; a piece, in short, from which all marks of time were obliterated. It is very much to be feared that the skill of the choir would, for a time at least, be baffled, and that the piece, however simple,

would be rapidly converted into a specimen of "most admired disorder." This must be distinctly perceived, in order to attain an idea of the condition of music as an art, both in ancient times and in what are called the middle ages. The observance of time, if it does not itself constitute harmony, is certainly a necessary attendant on its existence ; it is that, without which harmony cannot be created ; and it must be marked, either by the distinctions of notes and rests, or by the direction of a leader, or by the undirected taste of the performer. In ancient days the time was indicated, very imperfectly of course, but still in some degree, by the length of the syllables to which the music was set, and by a leader who beat the time audibly. But in what way it was marked in the chanting of the church, in the first thousand years of Christianity, there are no means of determining. It was, perhaps, a thing of tradition altogether. No wonder, then, the progress of the art both of composition and of performance was slow. No wonder, where so much was left of necessity to the unguided improvisation of the singer or player, that bad judgment was more prevalent than good ; and that the art was more and more corrupted from the simplicity which is the guide of correct taste.

Five centuries elapsed from the time of Guido, during which music was wandering in doubt, and obscurity, and weakness, without a guide on whom to rely, and without a definite object of pursuit. This long period was not, however, wholly lost. The caprices of even bad taste revealed some of the powers of song, as the freaks of alchymy developed some of the laws of nature. Rules of composition, and something like a regular system of notation, became of acknowledged authority ; and in the fifteenth century the art of printing came powerfully to its aid, as it did to that of every other human pursuit. At length, in the sixteenth century, appeared one of those truly illustrious men, endowed with those great powers, with which the Almighty from time to time adorns our nature, for bringing beauty out of deformity, order out of confusion, and for stamping the impress of his fertile genius on his own and all succeeding ages. This was Johann Pierluigi of Palestrina. He was born at Præneste in 1529, a period when, though the rules of musical composition were beginning to be settled, yet the taste and invention displayed in it were not usually such as to excite admiration or pleasure.

So bad was the style of the music performed in the church, that Pope Marcellus the Second, in 1555, was about to issue an edict to abolish the use of it in the sacred office, when Palestrina besought him to hear a mass of a different character from the frivolous, florid music then in vogue, and to give the noble art still a place where it could be most effective. He obtained the permission he asked, and produced a mass, which, by its simplicity and dignity, completely conquered the strong and probably not unjust dislike the Pope had expressed for the more popular music of the day. This signal triumph, obtained by a young man of twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, not only saved music from the threatened banishment from its sacred home, but placed Palestrina at once at the head of the art, as the best composer, not only of his own, but of all preceding time. This position he never lost, and through all succeeding ages he must continue to be regarded as the successful reformer of a barbarous era, and the father and founder of a better school, which, from that day to this, has been considered as the school of true taste. His compositions were numerous, comprising nearly all descriptions of the serious style now in use. They are still extant, and are not unfrequently performed in Italy by those who have a just reverence for his genius and skill. They may not possess the flowing ease of some more modern productions, but they are of a kind which will never cease to produce a strong effect upon men's minds and hearts. It is a mistake to suppose that there is a particular style of music which is adapted to a particular period of the world. Music is a universal language, and what is able powerfully to affect one generation of men will not fail to affect another. There may be conceits and fancies in fashion at certain periods or places, which soon pass away, because they are not in good taste; but that which can interest and please in tone, imitation, or harmony, will never cease to interest and please. Palestrina had the merit and the glory of pointing out the true path in which music should walk, the true mode in which she must produce her effects; and from his day to the present there has been but one school of good music. Divided and subdivided as the schools have nominally been, correct taste is one and indivisible; and all must be conducted by her guidance, or they cease to be schools of music, and degenerate into academies of uproar. There is, in reality, little to distinguish the so-called different schools, but the different

degrees of attainment and genius of the authors who have been educated at different places. The obstacles which have obstructed the progress of some, and the facilities which have surrounded others, may, perhaps, be perceived ; but all aim at the same object by the same general means, and therefore belong to the same school. This deserves, in some respects, to be called the school of Palestrina. He pointed out the path in which music may go on for ever improving ; he taught men to explore that garden of inexhaustible fertility, in which the plants that he trained still live, and in which the successive brilliant productions of music will remain for ever fresh and fair. We do not mean that it is impossible to point out differences between the composers of one nation and those of another, or to deny that some are more successful in melody, and some in harmony ; but as we hold that both are necessary to the production of the best music, any defect in either must be counted as an imperfection in the author as a musical composer, to whichever school, as it is called, he may belong.

From the days of Palestrina until now, the musical taste and the musical productions of the civilized world have increased in an accelerating ratio. Invention has been applied, not only to the writing of music, but to the instruments by which it is to be performed, and the art of execution on those instruments ; so that each successive age has reached a point, both in composition and performance, which was either not thought of, or deemed unattainable, by its predecessor. Since his time, too, another style of music has been introduced, and become so much a favorite as almost to supplant the more venerable music of the church, which was the first to be brought to some degree of perfection, and was the foundation of all that has succeeded. Towards the close of the sixteenth century music began to appear in company with the dramas, which were then popular ; and, rude as the first essays probably were, and imperfect as the instrumental accompaniment certainly was, the effect produced upon the feelings of the audience was great beyond any thing known in those days, and was compared to that of the ancient Greek and Roman dramas.*

The *moralties* and *mysteries*, the title under which the drama first appeared in the middle ages, were frequently performed by strolling companies upon an ambulatory stage ;

* Burney, Vol. IV. p. 18.

and there is an interesting account in Della Valle, of the first secular musical drama in Rome, which we shall extract from Dr. Burney.*

“ The music of my *cart*, or movable stage, composed by Quagliati, [his master,] in my own room, chiefly in the manner he found most agreeable to me, and performed in masks through the streets of Rome during the Carnival of 1606, was the first dramatic action, or representation in music, that had ever been heard in that city. Though no more than five voices, or five instruments, were employed, the exact number which an ambulant cart could contain, yet these afforded great variety ; as, besides the dialogue of single voices, sometimes two, or three, and, at last, all the five sung together, which had an admirable effect. The music of this piece, as may be seen in the copies of it that were afterwards printed, though dramatic, was not all in simple recitative, which would have been tiresome, but ornamented with beautiful passages, and movements in measure, without deviating, however, from the true theatrical style ; on which account it pleased extremely, as was manifest from the prodigious concourse of people it drew after it, who, so far from being tired, heard it performed five or six several times. There were some who even continued to follow our cart to ten or twelve places where it stopped, and who never quitted us as long as we remained in the street, which was from four o’clock in the evening till after midnight.”

The scholar will remark the curious coincidence between the earliest dramatic representations of Greece and of Italy ; and the musician will cease to wonder at the effects of ancient skill, when he reflects upon those of Della Valle’s ambulatory *cart*. It may be observed, that here is an early mention of recitative, which seems to have been coeval with the secular drama, and which corresponds, in some degree, with what was originally called chanting in sacred music. It is the chanting of the theatre, with greater variety and expression than that of the church, but quite as far removed from the graceful regularity of the air or song.

During the succeeding century the opera gradually assumed its regular form, and became an established branch of public amusement. It was not, however, till perfected by the dramatic genius of Metastasio, that it assumed the high rank it has since maintained in theatrical literature. The last century

* Ibid. pp. 37, 38.

was, in all respects, the most interesting and important period, which has occurred in the history of music. New branches of the art were cultivated, while those previously known were vastly developed and improved, by the genius of the greatest composers the world has yet seen. It would be at once useless and uninteresting to insert, in this rapid sketch of the progress of music, the long list of the names of those who, with various success, have devoted themselves to its different departments. Nor will it be possible to assign to precise dates, or to particular individuals, the improvements in instruments and methods of performance, which have successively added to the power of music and the means at the disposal of the composer. We must remain satisfied with the general fact that each following age has had greater resources than its predecessor, and with the probability that succeeding times will go on improving, as long as man is endowed with ingenuity, and feels an interest in the illimitable, the divine art. It is impossible, however, even to think of music without instantly recollecting the names of those illustrious men of the last century, who are identified with its very existence, and who, if no other composers had ever written, would have sufficed to make the era glorious, and to furnish the highest pleasures of music to all after time. We refer, of course, to George Frederic Handel, Joseph Haydn, and John Chrysostom Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

George Frederic Handel, or, as he would be more properly called, Haendel, was born at Halle, in February, 1684. He was the son of a physician, who had determined to educate him to the profession of law, and by no means encouraged the early propensity he discovered for music. Such, however, was the strength of his passion for it, that, notwithstanding these circumstances, he had attained remarkable skill on the harpsichord at the age of seven years, without particular instruction, solely by the force of his own industry and young enthusiasm. At nine years of age he began to compose church music with full instrumental accompaniments, and soon surpassed his master, who was organist of the cathedral at Halle. In 1698 he went to Berlin, where the opera was flourishing under the direction of Frederic the Great, and where Handel soon distinguished himself by his knowledge and skill. He did not remain here, however, but going to Hamburg, where also an opera was established, he immediately became its director, and, before he was fifteen years old,

began his career as a composer of operas. His first piece, "Almeria," was performed thirty nights in succession; and two others were received with equal favor. After five years of study and success in Hamburg, he travelled to Italy, where he spent six years in improving himself, and delighting others by his operas and other musical compositions. Here he wrote the oratorio of the "Resurrection," and many sonatas and songs.

In 1710, after a short visit to his native country, he went to England, which was thenceforth to be his home, and which he never left but for a short period, till his death in 1759. For nearly fifty years spent there, he was constantly employed in writing operas, oratorios, and every species of music, and was director at the Haymarket and Covent Garden successively. He was often engaged in quarrels with those who envied his success, or could not yield to his very natural pride. One occasion is worth mentioning. In 1720 he produced an opera, which met with unprecedented success, and excited the jealousy of his rivals, at the head of whom was Buononcini. The dispute which arose was referred to a trial of skill for adjustment. Both were to compose an act of the same opera, and the possession of the theatre was to be the prize. Handel wrote the overture and the last act, and retained the theatre.

However unfavorable these controversies may have been to his personal comfort, or his reputation for mildness of character, the musical world will scarcely regret their occurrence; for it was to avoid any dependence upon jealous rivals that he turned his attention more to the composition of oratorios, and produced those magnificent works, which have ever since been the delight of all who have heard them, and in which beauty and sublimity are so happily mingled. The "Messiah" was one of his later works, and will easily be conceded to be one of the best musical productions extant. It belongs to the highest class of compositions; for much, that would be well adapted to a lighter style, would serve to degrade the elevated character of a sacred drama. Nothing is insignificant, nothing trifling, and there are numerous airs of unsurpassed beauty, numerous choruses and other passages of unequalled sublimity, and a power of adaptation and strength of expression, which belong to musical genius of the highest order only. The operas of Handel have been laid aside to make way for newer

productions in another, which we will not call a better style ; but we are inclined to believe, that, were they revived with the aid of the better instrumentation of the present day, they would be received at once as a novelty and as a class of productions of superior merit. The multiplicity of his works is very great, and proves the untiring industry of a long life, combined with the inexhaustible fertility of a beautiful imagination.

Of an entirely different character was the genius of the next of the great composers of the age. Haydn was the son of a wheelwright, and was born at Rohrau in Lower Austria, in 1732. He distinguished himself at the same early age as Handel by his passion for music ; and, with the aid of a neighbouring schoolmaster, acquired some knowledge both of singing and playing at the age of seven. From eight to eighteen he was one of the choir of St. Stephen's at Vienna ; and, after quitting that situation, he experienced for several years the ills of poverty and obscurity. At length an opera, composed in his twentieth year, procured for him at once reputation and comfort, as he was soon appointed director of the chapel of Prince Esterhazy. In this situation he had opportunity to devote himself to composition in such style as his own inclination dictated ; and the result was an abundance of productions, which have placed him in the foremost rank of skilful and scientific composers. As might be expected from his early education, his taste led him rather to the serious style of church music than to the gayer one suited to the theatre ; and the greater part of his vocal compositions are masses and oratorios. In these are exhibited, in the most striking manner, a solemn grace and dignity of expression, which never forsake this wonderfully grand master ; while he is occasionally carried, by the impetus of his sublime conceptions, to the utmost limit of expression and of the power of human sympathy. There are few things which give a more intense excitement to human feelings, and it may be doubted if even strong nerves could bear a more powerful stimulus than is produced by some of Haydn's music.

But, extraordinary as were his talents in the vocal department, they were, if possible, exceeded by his skill in the employment of instruments. The novelty, variety, beauty, and intensity of expression in his numerous compositions of this class, would, *à priori*, be quite incredible ; and nothing but

the actual hearing can convince one of the possibility of presenting such vivid pictures to the ear. It is not less delightful than astonishing, to witness this power of imitation. It is a combination of intellect and sensation, on the part of the hearer as well as the inventor, which is among the highest gratifications of earth ; and for how many a thrill of pleasure, pure, refined, and heart-felt, is not the world indebted to the sublime, the boundless genius of Haydn ! Of all musical writers who have yet lived, he is the greatest master of this art of imitation. He made instruments speak a new language, and under his hand “a new-created world ” of music sprung into being.

Of Mozart it is difficult for the lovers of music to speak with that moderation, which is necessary to give weight to language. He so enchanted men’s minds, so beguiled them of their affections, appealed so strongly to the tenderest sensibility, and produced so often specimens of the most lovely creations of genius, that one almost despairs of either doing justice to his memory, or making others sensible of his pre-eminent power. He was called, in his own time, the musical prodigy ; and well he might be, for from the age of three years to his death at that of thirty-six, he was constantly astonishing men either by his precocious ability, or by the wonderful beauty, the sweetness, the inexpressible charm of his exquisite music. In his fifth year he began to compose little pieces, which he would play to his father on the piano, and then write off in score. In his sixth year he wrote a concerto for the piano, in strict conformity with the rules of composition, and so difficult as to require no inexperienced hand to perform it. In this year he visited Vienna, in company with his father and sister, and played before the imperial court the most difficult pieces of the most eminent composers ; and so conscious was he of his own extraordinary powers, as to treat with entire disregard the commendations of any but those who were themselves skilful. He had hitherto played on the piano only ; but at Vienna he was presented with a little violin, on which he *taught himself* to play during the journey home to Salzburg, so well as to execute with entire precision the second part of a trio, to the infinite surprise of his father, who did not know of his acquisition. In his seventh year he was taken to Paris, and afterwards to London, where he passed a year and a half, and then went home

by way of Holland and the Rhine, everywhere exciting astonishment and delight by his early and beautiful talent. At twelve years old he again went to Vienna, and presided over the imperial orchestra at the performance of some of his own music. At thirteen he went to Italy; and at fourteen he wrote his first regular opera, for the theatre of Milan. This was so much admired as to be repeated more than twenty times. From this period till his death he produced in rapid succession operas, which were then and still continue to be the delight of the civilized world, besides a great variety of music of almost every kind, instrumental and vocal. The highest qualities of music are to be found in them all. There is no deficiency of variety, although they all bear marks of their paternity. With a single exception, the most prominent quality of them all is beauty, a gentle, feminine grace and delicacy, which, like the same traits in the female character, are wonderfully combined with spirit, dignity, and energy. The exception to which we refer is his *Don Juan*, in which there is a mixture of the gay and reckless character of the hero, with the horror of his fate, which gives it a style altogether unique. Sublimity is rather its characteristic than beauty. Approaching more nearly than was usual with Mozart to the direction of the genius of Haydn, it drew from the latter the opinion, that its author was the first of living composers. The *Requiem* too is marked quite as much by its rich and deeply flowing solemnity, as by the beauty of its strains, or the noble harmony of its composition.

In speaking of Mozart one must be excused for combining epithets which may seem exaggerated, but which, on examination, will be found not merely justified but required by his merits. He possessed all the highest powers of musical composition, whether in melody or harmony, expression or imitation; and never failed to exert them. He wrote nothing which was faulty, or even chargeable with mediocrity; nothing which was not animated by the very spirit of beauty. He was, indeed, a musical prodigy. His compositions form a striking climax to the musical history of the last century. Handel abounds in passages of singular beauty,—a sort of physical charm, yet by no means destitute of intelligence,—which pervades his works; Haydn commands our attention and engrosses all our faculties by his elevation, his power of expression, and his sustained dignity; Mozart captivates us

by all these qualities ; by the easy grace of his lighter strains, and the appropriate expression of those which are of a higher character. It seemed as if, in the case of musical composers, as in that of the poets,

“ The force of nature could no further go ;
To make a third, she joined the other two.”

The musical variety of nature is, however, inexhaustible ; and, since the time of Mozart, other genius has been exerted, not in vain, in her wide-extended dominion. Beethoven has shown us a wonderful scientific skill, and a dark imagination, lightened occasionally by a soft halo which shines the brighter by contrast ; and Weber has exhibited his wayward and beautiful fancy ; and Rossini yet lives to extend, if he pleases, his already vast empire over men's tastes. Rossini is the great enchanter of the present day ; and, if his genius be judged by the effect it has produced, it will scarcely be deemed inferior to that of either of the authors we have named. The enthusiasm of the public, in all Europe and America, which his operas first excited, has now continued undiminished for thirty years ; and so long as the most refined elegance, the most cheerful temperament, the most fertile invention shall continue to please, so long will Rossini continue to captivate. His music produces on the ear the same effect that is caused on the eye by the graceful air, the ease of manner, the animated expression of a beautiful woman ; and we cannot be surprised if we find in both a similar careless confidence in the power to please, the same frequent repetition of a successful manœuvre, the same heedlessness of established rules.

We have mentioned only a few of those whose talents have aided the progress of music, as it would be impossible to enumerate all within the limits of a volume ; and we have spoken of none who were natives of France or England, because, though multitudes have, in both countries, done honor to the science, yet none have reached the preëminence of those “ bright particular stars ” which have shone with such brilliant lustre. As for our own country, music cannot be said to have any history, and scarcely an existence here. Without a single native composer of instrumental music, and with only here and there one who ventures upon a song or an anthem, it becomes us to use a tone of modesty, which is unhappily too rare, with regard to our musical attainments, taste, and

skill. There is every thing to hope for a vigorous young country, where the luxuries of art are rapidly growing, under the protection of a still more rapidly accumulating wealth ; but, as yet, all is the subject of hope, not of complacent recollection. It is probably within the memory of the youngest of our readers, that a change has taken place in the style of performing the music in our churches, indicative of the neglect into which it had previously fallen, rather than of the excellence it has yet attained. The formation of the Boston Handel and Haydn Society was the dawn of a spirit of improvement ; but how long did it languish under the want of resources, and the neglect of the public. It is only within a very few years, that its success has been encouraging, and has corresponded with the effect which a good school should have upon the public. The recent establishment of the Academy is another proof of the increasing number of those, who so love the "concord of sweet sounds," as to be willing to devote their leisure to the acquisition of the art of producing them ; its present state should, however, be regarded rather as the foundation of better things to come, than as a theme of self-satisfaction. They have begun a good thing in a good manner ; but it would show a very limited conception of the value of music, to rest satisfied with the ability to give an occasional concert in a respectable style. This is but a humble branch of the art ; and the attainment of the degree of skill necessary, ought, and we trust will be ere long, so common as to be no ground of boastful complacency. It must be recollected, that we are greatly behind the other civilized countries of the world in common musical proficiency ; and, if we would compete with them at all, we must fix on something higher, as an object of pursuit, than has heretofore been attempted among us. We must look forward to the production of music of every kind ; to training up a school, not merely of vocal, but instrumental performers, who shall be thoroughly taught in all that can be taught of music, and whose native talent shall be fostered and encouraged, till some among them shall be able to repay the care bestowed, by the display of new musical creations, acquiring for themselves, and their country, a name like that we are already claiming in the sister arts. The time when this shall be accomplished may not be near ; and yet, if the public will afford the due support, it may not be so far distant as some might imagine.

It may, perhaps, have been observed, that five out of the six brilliant names we have mentioned, of the last and present century, are German. How does it happen, that a nation of kindred origin with our own parent stock, and with a language almost as unmusical as ours, should have produced such an uncommon proportion of musical genius of the highest order, while that of England has been certainly less brilliantly displayed? Is it not manifest that the national practice of giving the rudiments of a musical education at school must have contributed largely to the development of the whole national talent for the art? This then should be pursued as the most important means of eliciting the now dormant taste and talent of our country. It will be found easy, pleasant, and profitable; and upon institutions like the Academy devolves the responsibility of urging the importance of the acquisition in terms commensurate with its value. Let it be presented to all who have charge of the education of youth, till they shall be satisfied that the elements of music are not the least important of those which may be taught in schools; and, if the system should not extend beyond our own city, its advantages would soon be so evident as to add another to the favorable distinctions of our already favored home.

ART. IV. — 1. *Narodne Serpske pjesme*, izdao WUK STEF. KARADJICH.

Servian Popular Songs, published by VUK STEF. KARADJICH. Vol. IV. Vienna. 1833.

2. *Piesnie Ludu palskiego i ruskiego w Galicyi*, zebrane parzez WACLAWA Z. OLESKA.

Songs of the Polish and Russian People of Galicia, collected by WENCESLAUS OLESKY. Lemberg. 1833.

THIS is the age of utilitarianism. The Genius of poetry still lives indeed, for he is immortal; but the period of his living power is gone. His present dwelling is the study; the sphere of his operations the parlour; the scene, where his exhibitions are displayed in a dress of morocco and gold, is the centre-table of the rich and the genteel. *Popular poetry*, — we do not mean that divine gift, the dowry of a few blessed